United Nations A/67/530

General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 October 2012

Original: English

Sixty-seventh session
Agenda item 110 (d)
Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of eighteen members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 18 October 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Gabon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

The Permanent Mission of the Gabonese Republic to the United Nations has the honour to enclose herewith the commitments and pledges of the Gabonese Republic, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251 (see annex).

The Gabonese Republic is a candidate for membership of the Human Rights Council for the period 2013-2015, the elections for which are to be held on 12 November 2012. This candidature has been endorsed by the African Union.

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Annex to the note verbale dated 18 October 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Gabon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretariat

[Original: French]

Candidature of Gabon to the Human Rights Council for the period 2013-2015

Voluntary pledges and commitments, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/251

1. The Gabonese Republic has always acted in accordance with international law in the promotion and protection of human rights.

2. Indeed, one of the goals pursued by the Congolese Government in this field is to establish the necessary conditions to uphold justice and respect the obligations arising from international treaties and other sources of international law.

3. The Gabonese Republic is once again submitting its candidature for the Human Rights Council in order to join the efforts of the international community to strengthen those rights. It therefore undertakes to engage, at the national level, in promoting and protecting the universal principles of human rights and to contribute to their effective application at the regional and international levels.

4. The Gabonese Republic was a member of the Human Rights Council from 2006 to 2008 and from 2009 to 2011. The positions it took within this body, when examining human rights violations, testify to its commitment to work continually to promote the ideals of peace, justice, equality and freedom, which are the very foundation of the Charter of the United Nations.

5. In 2011, the Gabonese Republic participated actively in Geneva and New York in the review of the Council's status and methods of work.

At the national level

6. The Gabonese Constitution guarantees respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

7. The following bodies have been established to ensure that the rights of citizens, including women, children and handicapped persons, are respected:

- National Human Rights Commission
- National Observatory on the Rights of the Child
- National Observatory for Women's Rights and Equality

8. In close cooperation with a number of countries and international organizations, Gabon has been consistently working to strengthen its national human rights promotion and protection system.

At the regional level

9. Gabon played a key role in the establishment of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, which it had the honour of chairing.

10. Gabon has always offered its good offices in efforts to find solutions to the many conflicts plaguing Africa, which often cause political instability that could result in serious human rights violations.

At the international level

11. Gabon, which has been a Member of the United Nations since it became independent in 1960, is genuinely committed to promoting the goals and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments.

12. Accordingly, Gabon has signed, ratified or acceded to the following major legal instruments:

- African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights
- Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- International Convention on the Elimination and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

13. In June 2011, during its second presidency of the United Nations Security Council, the efforts of Gabon to protect vulnerable individuals led to the adoption, at its initiative, of resolution 1983 (2011).

14. Resolution 1983 (2011) is devoted in large part to the protection of women and girls against sexual violence during armed conflict and against their risk of HIV infection.

15. Within the United Nations General Assembly, Gabon likewise spearheaded an initiative in favour of the rights of widows and orphans, resulting in the adoption of resolution 65/189, which established International Widow's Day, to be observed on 23 June each year.

Gabon's pledge to the Human Rights Council

16. Gabon pledges to cooperate fully with the Human Rights Council in all the areas that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 60/251, fall under the Council's purview.

17. In that regard, it pledges to engage in all the work of the Human Rights Council with a view to promoting and strengthening human rights protection mechanisms.

18. Gabon makes this pledge in the firm belief that the Human Rights Council serves as the pre-eminent democratic forum where Member States can, on the basis of mutual respect, undertake dialogue and consultations with a view to finding solutions to human rights issues.

19. Lastly, the Gabonese Republic pledges to implement the recommendations contained in the outcome of the second cycle of the universal periodic review.